

CAPTAIN JOHN'S ADVENTURES



"The Lord thy God is with Thee."

3rd

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AS A

Reward for Regular Attendance

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Infant Class

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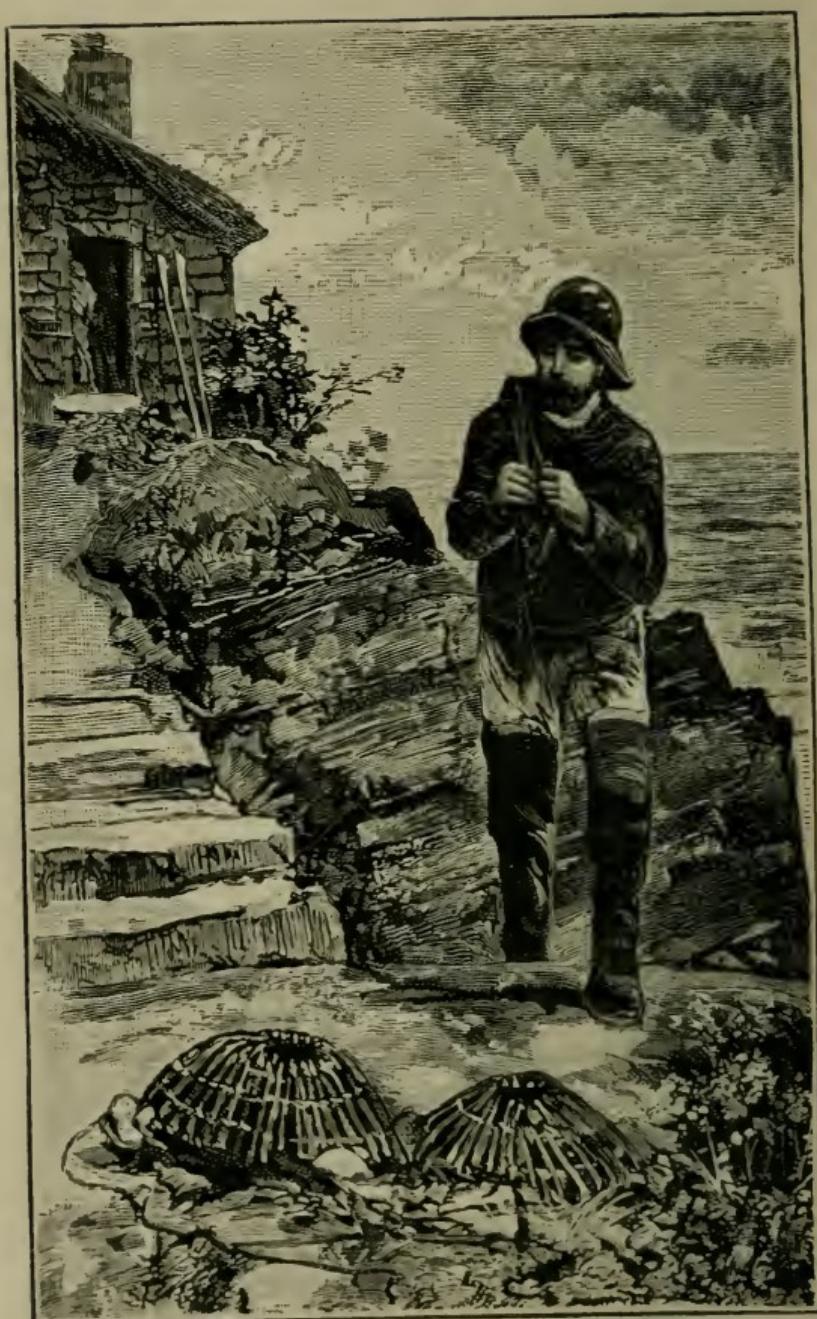
"Whithersoever Thou Goest."

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Sheila T. Lambright

CAPTAIN JOHN'S ADVENTURES



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OR

The Story of a Fatherless Boy

EDINBURGH & LONDON
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OLIPHANT ANDERSON & FERRIER'S SIXPENNY BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

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<i>The Best Work.</i>	
<i>The Best Warfare.</i>	
<i>True Heart.</i>	
<i>Won for the Kingdom.</i>	

CAPTAIN JOHN'S ADVENTURES

CHAPTER I.

THE FISHERMAN'S DWELLING—HOME MADE DESOLATE.

RICHARD LEDDAM was a poor man, who obtained a subsistence by toiling in all weathers in catching fish and oysters, which he sold to persons whose business it was to supply the city market. The village in which he lived was exposed on one side to the ocean waves, the other was washed by the calmer waters of a bay. Here a few families were induced to dwell, invited by the facilities for procuring fish.

Lonely as the village was, it was not an unpleasant spot; the grounds were shaded by fine trees, and the constant sea breeze rendered the atmosphere cool and healthy. On a little indenture of the shore, where the bay setting in formed a cove, stood the cabin of the fisherman. It was built of logs, and a sloping shed protected the house from winter storms and summer suns. Beneath this shelter were kept, when not in use, the fishing boat and the fishing tackle. Here too the family assembled in fine weather, and thence the anxious wife sent many a wishful glance, when expecting her husband's return.

Their family consisted of two boys, John and Henry, and three daughters.

Here they lived in rude comfort—poor, but not destitute; and when, after a successful day, the family met in their

humble home, from which they looked out on the sparkling waters, while the father related his adventures, they might be called happy, as far as exemption from care could make immortal beings happy.

But of his glorious birthright as an immortal spirit, Richard Leddam thought not. If he mentioned the name of his Creator, it was only to profane it. There was no prayer offered to God in that family, and Sabbaths came and went, not reverenced, almost unheeded. Once, while at a neighbouring city, where he had gone with a boat load, his little vessel was visited by a Christian gentleman, who gave him a Bible, which he brought to his wife; but whether it was prized as it deserved to be, or whether the fisherman, in his solitary hours upon the sea, ever turned in repentance to his God and Saviour, none can tell.

One boisterous day in November he left

the cove, thinking that the wind would lull by noon. His wife remembered that when he had gone a few steps from the door he returned to bid them farewell again, and placing his hand on John's head, told him to be good, and help his mother.

The wind increased through the day, and the tempest was fearful all night. When the light dawned, the distressed family beheld the boat floating upwards,—but their only friend they never saw again.

With the assistance of a neighbour the boat was drawn up, and placed in its usual resting-place in the shed. The children gathered around it with sorrowful faces, as if it had been their father's coffin. The mother looked silently on the helpless little ones; then, leaning her face on her hand, as she rested on the side of the boat, she wept piteously. One of the neigh-

bours perceiving a Bible, which lay on a shelf, took it down and read the eleventh chapter of John. The word of God soothed the poor widow's grief; and when they were alone she said to her son, 'Read to me those good words again.' How many sorrowful hearts have those good words relieved!

CHAPTER II.

THEY MOVE TO THE CITY.

THE kind neighbour who loved the Bible, and had read it to the poor widow, came daily to read more of the 'good words.' The clergyman too came to visit her in her sorrow, and explained to her the words that had soothed her even while she understood them but imperfectly. Mrs Leddam felt how sinful she had been in living all her life without a thought of

God, and now in her affliction she turned to Him whom she had so long forgotten.

The good clergyman spoke to her of Jesus, the Saviour of sinners, through whom alone we can receive pardon and peace ; and the poor widow prayed to this blessed Saviour as she had never prayed before, and He heard her and comforted her heart ; for He has said, ‘Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.’

As John was too young to manage the boat, it was sold with the nets and fishing tackle, and the widow with her five children removed to the neighbouring town, where she hoped to find employment in sewing. She hired a small house in the outskirts of the town ; and there, with her little flock around her, she felt like a desolate stranger.

How little do those children who are blessed with many comforts know of the trials of the poor and fatherless !

But the widow had now a source of comfort in her trials. John daily read some of the ‘good words’ to his mother. They rejoiced in God’s many promises to the widow and the fatherless, and trusted that He would provide. The town was situated on the bank of a broad river, and the widow’s cottage stood not far from the water. Near it stood a small house, which one would have said had been built by a sailor ; and he would have said rightly, for Captain Sam had made his dwelling as much like the vessel in which he had spent his best days as he could. In front of the house was a small porch, shaded by a sail ; and here the old man passed the most of his time, smoking his pipe. The poor neighbours thought that Captain Sam was a rich man, because he could afford to do nothing.

Within sight of the captain’s house was

a grocer's shop, where every morning numbers of poor children came to procure supplies for the day. Among them the captain observed John and Henry, as having clean faces, and as being neatly dressed. John's attention had been attracted by the captain's house. He admired the bright colour with which it was painted, and had conceived a great respect for its happy owner; for John, like the rest, thought it must be very pleasant to be idle,—a great mistake, as any one who will try it may soon discover. Hearing the shopkeeper call him captain, he asked, 'Is he a real captain, sir?'

'How do I know, youngster?' replied the man. 'You had better ask him that yourself.'

The next day, observing his mother weeping, John said, 'Mother, can't I get work?'

She laid her hand on his head as she replied, ‘What could you do, my son?’

‘A heap of things,’ he said earnestly. ‘I can help to row, and mend the nets.’

‘But we are now far away from the fishing. We are in a strange place, full of people, where, in the midst of plenty, we are likely to come to want; for this is the last money I have in the world.’

‘Oh, mother!’ said the terrified boy, ‘will they let us starve? won’t some of the rich people help you?’

‘I am going in search of work,’ replied his mother. ‘Take care of your brother and sisters until I return.’

‘May I walk as far as the corner, mother?’

Giving him permission to do so, Mrs Leddam left the house.

Now John had a plan of his own, but he was puzzled to know how to bring it

about. He had often accompanied his father to the vessels in the bay, and had a strong partiality for sailors. He thought if he could but make a friend of this rich captain, who lived in the fine house, how happy he should be. So, after thinking it over, he resolved to see the captain, and tell him how poor his mother was. Bidding Henry watch his baby sister, he set out for the corner; but as he walked on he felt his courage become fainter, until his young heart almost failed.

But we will turn to a new chapter to relate his introduction to the captain.

CHAPTER III.

JOHN MAKES SOME ACQUAINTANCES.

JOHN had not walked far when he saw a horse galloping down the street: the people shouted, which only made the horse

run the faster ; but just as he reached the corner, John made a spring, and, catching the rein, in a moment he was on his back. John's time, when he lived at the fishing village, had been divided between riding ponies and paddling boats ; but he had never ridden so fine an animal as this,—his skin shone like satin, and his saddle and bridle were so handsome, that the little boy concluded he must belong to some very rich captain indeed.

Directly a ragged boy came up to him with ‘ Halloo ! there, what are you doing with my horse ? ’

‘ I caught him,’ said John, ‘ but I don’t believe he belongs to you ;’ so, touching his side with his heel, the spirited horse set off at full speed, and did not stop till he reached a handsome house, on the steps of which stood a gentleman with a whip in his hand, just ready for a ride. He

was pleased to get his horse, and put a shilling in John's hand for his trouble.

So large a piece of money astonished the child ; his eyes glistened, and, without knowing it, he spoke his thoughts : ‘ Oh, mother, you need not have cried so ! ’

The gentleman was preparing to mount his horse, but hearing these words, he said, ‘ What was the matter with your mother ? ’

‘ She had no money to buy us bread, sir.’

‘ Has she no work to do ? ’

‘ We have just come here, and mother does not know any one.’

‘ Why did you come here, boy ? ’

John thought this was a foolish question, but he answered, ‘ Father was drowned, and mother couldn't fish, and she was afraid we should starve in the village ; but I am more afraid of it here.’

The gentleman smiled and said, ‘ I do not think there is much danger of that.’

But John looked in his face with a serious countenance, and said, ‘People are obliged to starve when they have no money. I asked the shopkeeper for one biscuit for the baby, and he said he would whip me.’

‘The hard-hearted fellow !’ said the stranger to himself ; then, looking at his watch, ‘I am hurried now, but bring your mother here this evening.’ As he spoke he rode away ; but checking his horse, he called to John, ‘My little lad, have you had your breakfast ? Ah ! he is gone ; I should have thought of that before.’ But happy John was already half way home. As he passed he saw Captain Sam seated before his door, lighting his pipe ; and he determined to stop and speak to him. John began to think better of the towns-folk, as he called them ; and the thought of having some money in his pocket gave

him more confidence, in which our fisherman's boy resembled people much older and wiser than himself.

When John came near to the captain, his heart began to beat quickly, and he made the best bow that his country education had taught him. It would have been a hard heart that could not feel for him, as he stood with his straw hat in his hand, his brown curling hair setting off his honest countenance, which, young as it was, wore an expression of care. It is sad to see trouble clouding the brow of childhood; but He who sends affliction, will send strength to bear it, if we ask Him. Though John's father had been dead but a few weeks, he had thought more in that short time than in his whole life before. While he read God's precious promises to his mother, he learned to pray to that merciful God, and love the kind Saviour.

No doubt it was the Lord's kindness which turned the heart of the old captain toward the little fatherless boy. No sooner did he see John's modest bow and serious face than he felt an interest in him.

'Sit down on the steps, my little man, and tell me your name. I suppose you live in one of these cottages ?'

John's simple story was soon told. When he mentioned his father's name, the old sailor called to his wife, 'I say, Sally, come here ; this is Richard Leddam's son : many's the job your father has done for me, child. Wife, give him something to eat ; I suspect the locker at home is empty.'

John's heart had been so full that he did not know how hungry he was, till Mrs. Newton set before him some bacon and bread. They smiled to see him enjoy his meal ; but all at once he stopped eating,

and said, ‘Please, sir, let me take this to the children, they are so hungry !’

‘Sally,’ said the captain, ‘put some more on the plate ; as it’s but a step, we will walk along and see poor Leddam’s little ones.’

How pleased the children were when they saw their brother, and the good breakfast which he brought them ! My young reader, would you know the worth of money ? go feed the hungry and clothe the poor orphan.

‘Have you been to school, John ?’ said Captain Sam.

‘Father taught me to read, sir.’

‘He could not have done you a better turn, my lad ; but you won’t be a land-lubber, hey !’

‘I would like to be a real sailor, sir, like those I saw in the big ships in the bay. Henry wants to be a sailor too.’

'Ah!' said the captain, 'if you were only a little older; but we will see.'

Just then the door was opened, and Mrs Leddam returned. She was pale and sad, but her heart seemed to revive when she heard her visitor speak kindly to her. 'It is a great comfort,' she said, 'to know that there is one person in this strange place that feels for these poor children. John has been talking of you, sir, ever since we came here; he is so bent on being a sailor.'

'And a sailor he shall be,' said the captain, slapping his hands together. 'I hope you will live to see him sail his own vessel.'

When their new friends were gone, John told his mother of the message from the strange gentleman, and gave her the money he had received for catching the horse.

‘You have done a better morning’s work than I have,’ she said.

‘Did you go to many places, mother?’

‘I will eat some of this good bread, my son, and then tell you.’

CHAPTER IV.

BE YE KIND-HEARTED.

‘I WENT first,’ said Mrs Leddam, ‘to the houses where I supposed rich people lived.’

‘There’s handsome houses in that wide street,’ interrupted John. ‘I saw, through the windows, pictures hanging on the walls, and such beautiful curtains! Did you go to them?’

‘I stopped at one door,’ his mother replied: ‘the servant was dressed as fine as a gentleman. He looked at me with contempt, and said his mistress had company.

At another house, I got to see the lady
She was sitting in a velvet chair, rocking
her baby, and was handsome and pleasant
spoken, and asked me to sit down.'

'She gave you some work?' said John.

'Ah!' replied Mrs Leddam, sighing, 'I
don't think she ever felt trouble. For a
moment she seemed sorry for me; but she
was so much taken up with her little girl,
that she seemed to forget for a while that
I was in the room, and then dismissed me
hastily, telling me to call again. As I
rung the bell at another fine house, the
mistress came out to the door, elegantly
dressed, and stepped into a carriage which
was waiting. I asked her for work, and
told her of my starving children. She
looked cross, and said there was no end to
the calls of poor people. I looked at a
bright purse which she held in her hand,
and thought that one of the gold pieces

that shone through the silk would make me easy for a week. At last I felt faint and sick, and came home.'

'Wasn't you glad, mother,' said Henry, 'when you found us so well off ?'

'Yes, my son ; I felt that God had not forsaken us. And now, John, read me the chapter we had yesterday.'

'Which, mother ? where Jesus fed the five thousand ?'

'Yes ; I love to hear that part which speaks of women and children : surely He will take care of us helpless ones.'

It has been said, and whoever feels sorrow may know it to be true, 'A dark hour makes Jesus bright.' Before I close this chapter, let me ask my young reader to remember the words at the beginning, and try to put them in practice.

You may not always have money to give to the poor, but you can be kind

and thoughtful. A few kind words will often cheer the sad heart of the widow or orphan.

Would you be like Jesus,
And show His gentle mind ?
Then in all your actions
Remember to be kind.

CHAPTER V.

THE SPANISH SAILOR.

MRS LEDDAMS prospects began from this time to brighten, through the kindness of Captain Sam, and of the gentleman whose horse John had caught.

The captain interested a friend in John's behalf, who owned a small schooner which was called a lighter, and was used to convey the cargoes of large vessels to the city. He consented to take the little boy, and make a man of him, as he said. John

was obliged to work hard in all kinds of weather; but the thought of his mother, and trust in God, reconciled him to every hardship. Captain Morgan, his master, was a kind man, and inclined to be religious. When the work of the day was over, they used to sit in the little cabin of the 'Sally,' for so the vessel was named, and, while the captain smoked his pipe, John read to him in his Bible.

Now, this little boy was doing good all this time, though he did not think that such a child as he was could be of service to any one. The captain had hired a Spanish sailor to assist him, and to take charge of the boat when he was absent. This Antonio was a strange-looking creature. His skin was very dark, and his hair hung in black locks over his face. Although he seemed stern, and could look very fierce with his large bright eyes, yet beneath

his sailor jacket there beat a warm, kind heart. John soon won the good-will of the Spaniard by his obedient and pleasant manners, and as the little boy became attached to his new friend, he felt anxious to do him good.

One night, when the captain was away, Antonio brought the fishing net that he was netting into the cabin where John was alone. After they had conversed awhile, John opened the Bible, and proposed to read aloud. Antonio knew nothing of religion, except making the sign of the cross when he was sick or sad; but still he called himself a Roman Catholic, and did not want to hear the Bible read.

'Just let me read this part,' said John. 'Listen, Mr Antonio; it is about fishermen.' So, before he could speak, John began to read in Luke of the calling of Peter, and the miraculous draught of fishes.

Antonio became interested, and after that he made one of the little party in the cabin, and listened with profit to the word of God.

One fine morning they were lying near a small island; the bay was smooth as a mirror, and the trees were reflected, leaf for leaf, in its bosom. Now and then a fish would rise to the surface of the water, take a breath of air, and dive down again. John amused himself in observing some wild ducks swimming in the shallow water, watching for prey with fixed eyes and grave looks, and he smiled to see their disappointment when the little fish were too cunning or too nimble for them. He was interrupted by Antonio coming out of the cabin, dressed in his best clothes.

‘Why, Mr Antonio, where are you going?’

‘Nowhere,’ he replied. ‘This is my saint’s day.’

‘What’s that?’ inquired John.

‘Oh, I am named after San Antonio, and this is his day.’

‘Well,’ said John, ‘I have looked through the New Testament, and have never found such a saint there.’

‘Why,’ said Antonio, ‘he was not alive at that time.’

‘Who made him a saint then?’

Now, as the sailor had not troubled his head about the matter, he was puzzled to find an answer. At last he honestly confessed he did not know.

‘Suppose he is a saint,’ said John, ‘what good can he do you?’

‘Oh,’ he answered, ‘he can pray for me, and help me when I am in danger.’

John felt serious when he heard this, and said, ‘In that chapter we read last Sunday, the Lord Jesus says, “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I

will give you rest." There is nothing said about coming to St Antonio, or St Any-one; but, "Come to me." I would rather trust to the Saviour. Would not you?' and as he spoke, he looked affectionately in his friend's face.

Antonio did not reply; but he thought of what had been said, and at night he requested John to read that chapter to him again.

But time did not always pass so smoothly with our young friend. Many an hour did he spend drenched with rain and shivering with cold. Often, too, in helping to unload the vessels, he had to endure rude usage from the rough sailors and coal porters. Sometimes his heart was almost broken; but Antonio took his part, and comforted him by his kindness.

John tried in every way to show his gratitude; and when they were permitted to

visit the town, he prevailed on his friend to stay with him at his own home. These visits were pleasant holidays to John. He took care to bring a supply of fish with him, that he might not burden his mother: and if it happened that they could remain over the Sunday, he kept so close to Antonio that he went to church with him all the day.

It was a pleasant sight to see the sailor, cleanly dressed, sitting in God's house, listening to the instructions of the Bible; the young lad at his side watching his looks with such pleasure and interest, for of all things John desired most to see his friend a true Christian. I believe he was more anxious for this than even to be the master of a vessel.

CHAPTER VI.

BE YE ALSO READY.

TIME passed on, and John was now a manly youth of seventeen. He had, by his good conduct, obtained the confidence of his employer, and was earning high wages. He had saved all his money, that he might be able to buy a share in the schooner, and Captain Sam prophesied that he would soon be a captain himself. His brother Henry had been received into their employment, and was a smart, affectionate boy; but he never could rival John in the affections of Antonio.

When Mrs Leddam looked around her and saw the blessings that she enjoyed, her heart was filled with thankfulness; and she often told the old captain that no one need doubt the goodness of God to those who trust in Him.

For several years the family had been accustomed to take their Christmas dinner at Captain Sam's; and you may be sure that John and Antonio, who were always of the party, took care that there was no want of fine fish and a few wild ducks for the occasion. One morning, after enjoying a Christmas festival, they bade farewell to their friends, and jumping gaily on board their little vessel, which they called their home, unfurled the sail and glided down the bay.

It was a clear, bright December day. They were bound to a large ship which Captain Morgan had engaged to unload, and where he was expecting to meet them.

As they were sailing on pleasantly, Antonio remarked, 'Boys, I don't like the looks of the sky.'

'Why,' said Henry, 'it is as blue and bright as it can be'

'It will be dark enough before to-morrow,' he answered, 'so let us make more sail; we have a long pull before we reach the ship.'

Before sunset, just as they were in sight of the vessel, the wind, which had breathed gently from the west, veered round to the south-east, and began to blow hard. The water, lately so calm, soon changed its appearance, and the boat danced up and down as the waves grew rough beneath the influence of the wind. Night came upon them; a cold rain commenced falling; and as they laboured hard, hoping to reach the fishing village where John had lived, the tempest increased, and they wished in vain for day. But day never dawned on all that group of friends.

'Where are we?' said John, breaking a long silence. A flash of lightning, which blazed on the angry waters, and for

a moment lighted up the scene, answered his question, by discovering to them a point of land over which the waves were violently breaking.

'There is a cove in there,' said Antonio, 'if we could only make it.'

'It is full of ugly rocks,' replied John; 'I remember the place well.'

'Ay,' returned the sailor, 'I'll wait for another flash, and try for it.'

John would have dissuaded him, but his voice was lost in the roar of the tempest. He felt the boat tremble, as, obeying the helm, she turned towards the shore; and, catching hold of Henry's arm, he put his lips to his ear and said, 'Don't be frightened if we capsize, but strike out from the boat and swim.'

'Oh, brother!' cried Henry, 'this is dreadful;' and he clung to John, who only had time to say, 'Trust in God, pray

to Jesus,' when the frail vessel was violently hurled against a sunken rock and upset. It was a moment of confusion and struggles for life.

Antonio, who was at home in the water, only thought of the boys. He called loudly for them, and heard the voice of John answering. 'Thank God,' he said, 'my own boy is safe; but where is Henry? In the boat, perhaps, entangled in the rigging; how shall I find it in this darkness?'

'Oh, Henry, where are you?' cried John.

'Here,' he answered, 'clinging to the boat; but I am so cold I can't hold on much longer.'

'Keep up your courage,' said Antonio; 'I see the boat now, and will be there in a moment; hold on for your life!'

A furious gust of wind and rain passed over them and all was darkness for an

instant. Oh, how long even a moment seems in such circumstances! When the blast had swept by, John, who had sustained himself on a floating tree, endeavoured once more to find the schooner. He succeeded, and called out loudly for his brother. A faint voice responded, ‘Brother! brother! can’t you save me?’ and all was silent. For a long time they remained in the storm calling his name, but Henry never spoke again.

At last they gave up all hope of saving him, and swimming to the shore, they found a fisherman’s hut, where they obtained torches, and returned. The first object they saw was the body of Henry entangled among the timber with which the cove was filled. The lighter also was floating near him.

The storm was abating, and the moon, breaking through the clouds, threw her

light on the sad scene. While the fisherman took charge of the boat, John and his friend brought the lifeless boy to land, when Antonio tenderly lifted him in his arms, and carried him to the house. He bitterly reproached himself for running into the cove against John's advice, but John tried to console him. As he smoothed the wet ringlets on his brother's brow, and kissed his cold cheek, he said, ' You did it for the best, Mr Antonio; if it had been the will of God to save him, he would have been alive. I trust he is happy now, for he loved the blessed Saviour.'

The next day poor Henry was buried in the nearest churchyard. We shall not attempt to describe his mother's grief.

CHAPTER VII.

JOHN FINDS ANOTHER HENRY.

A SHORT time after the death of Henry, as John was walking along the wharf, he saw a ragged boy, apparently twelve years of age, leaning idly on a pile of boards. He was thin, and looked sad. John remembered his own feelings when he was left a fatherless boy, and he felt his heart drawn to him. Going to him, he asked if he had no work to do.

‘No,’ replied the lad, ‘I wish I had ; I would do anything.’

‘What does your father do for a living?’ John asked.

‘I have no father nor mother,’ said the lad ; ‘I just stay wherever people will let me.’

‘Would you like to work for me or board the schooner yonder?’

His face glowed with pleasure, and he exclaimed, ‘Wouldn’t I !’

‘What is your name?’

‘Harry, sir.’

This settled the matter in John’s mind. ‘I will take him,’ he thought, ‘in dear Henry’s place; and, if he be worthy, will be a brother to him, and mother will teach him to love God.’

The bargain was soon made, for the poor orphan had no one to care where he went; so, carrying his little bundle on his arm, he followed his new friend to the schooner, with a heart as light as a feather. He was a smart boy, and soon became useful. John took much pains to teach him to read and to instruct him in religion; for Harry did not know any more of God, or the blessed Saviour, than do the poor heathen who have never heard His name. Mrs Leddam

made him clothes, and treated him with the affection of a mother. All this kindness was so new and precious to Harry, who had been only used to hard words and cross looks, that his young heart opened to receive it with gratitude and joy, just as you may have seen a flower, almost withered by the drought, revive beneath a gentle shower, and send out fresh sweetness again. In the course of a few months no one would have known the happy looking Harry to be the ragged and sickly boy that John had met on the wharf. Harry had an Irish heart, and he repaid John's kindness with warm affection. He was afraid of Antonio's black eyes at first, but he soon learned to love the kind Spaniard. Thus they were a happy little party on board the 'Sally,' because they all loved God and each other.

It was a fine day in June that John

went with Antonio and Harry to visit his brother's grave. His mother wished to go with them, but John persuaded her not to do so, fearing that it would renew her sorrow. They found the place without difficulty. The oak trees were green and beautiful, and the mound of earth where Henry lay was already covered with rich verdure, and adorned with wild violets, white and blue, lifting their modest heads among the tall grass. The water rippled softly near the churchyard, and all looked so calm and lovely, that John could scarcely believe that this was the very spot where he had struggled so hard for life, and where, amid the roaring of the waters, poor Henry had sunk in death.

He could not help shedding tears as he stood by the grave; but when he remembered what the Bible says, he was comforted, and said, ‘Henry will rise again.’

‘Will he?’ said Harry, who was standing by his side.

‘Yes, the word of God says that we shall all rise from our graves at the last day;’ then, taking from his pocket his Bible, they seated themselves beneath a tree, while John read 1 Cor. xv. 52 : ‘For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.’ Then he turned to the first Epistle to the Thessalonians : ‘For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.’

Harry listened with attention till John ceased reading, then he asked him, ‘Did that little boy love God?’

‘Yes, he prayed to God every day, and was so mild and humble, that we all thought him a child of Jesus. Oh! what

a comfort it is when we look at his grave, to think that he will rise from it a glorious body, like our Saviour's; for the Bible tells us that "He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body."

Kneeling by the grave, they prayed that they might be faithful servants of Christ, and rest in peace at last. Then, unmooring their little vessel, they unfurled the sails, the breeze wafting them swiftly to the town.

When they knelt in family worship that night, John and his mother wept as they thought of the dear one who was sleeping in the lonely churchyard; but they did not weep as those who had no hope. As for Harry, he prayed earnestly that God would give him a new heart, that he might be His child; and he thanked His heavenly Father for placing him with kind and good people.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE POOR PRODIGAL SON.

A BOUT this time our young friend met with a singular adventure. He had been taught by his pastor, by reading the Bible, and, above all, by the teachings of the Holy Spirit, that if we love Christ, that love will make us wish to do good to others, and seek to bring them to the Saviour. It was John's constant prayer that God would give him something to do for Christ. Now, when we offer such a prayer in sincerity, it will be answered. We have seen that even when a young boy, John was taught to be useful to Antonio and his brother Henry; and as he grew older, his opportunities for doing good increased. My young reader, is there no one to whom you can do some good? Do you love the Lord Jesus yourself?

This is the first and most important question ; for if you are not a child of God, you cannot be useful to others,—indeed, you will do harm, and thus have a dreadful account to give at the day of judgment.

But to return to John's adventure. In the marshes at the mouth of the bay, there are great quantities of wild ducks. Many persons are employed in the winter season in shooting these birds, to supply the city market. They go out in small boats in pursuit of the game.

John often met with these duck hunters ; but as they were not always profitable companions, he avoided them, remembering that the Bible says, ‘ Evil communications corrupt good manners.’

It happened, however, that being obliged to lie at anchor, to make some little repairs to his rigging, he stopped where a small river emptied itself into the bay. Two or

three huts had been built to shelter the hunters ; for this was a favourite resort of the wild fowl.

As John was busy splicing ropes, a man, paddling a skiff, came alongside, and hailed him with, ‘My lad, have you any medicine aboard ? I wish you would let me have some for a sick man.’

‘ What kind do you want ? ’ John inquired.

‘ Well, I suppose it don’t matter much ; one kind is as good as another. But perhaps you would come yourself and see our young man, he seems very bad.’

John did not hesitate ; and taking a medicine chest, which he always kept with him, he jumped into the skiff, and in a few moments was at the side of the sick person.

Stretched on a hard and dirty pallet, in a damp, comfortless hovel, there lay a fine-

looking youth of eighteen, raving with fever, calling continually on his father and mother to come to him.

Several young men passed through the room, but they seemed reckless and dissipated, and their noisy mirth increased the delirium of the sufferer.

John seated himself by the bed, and taking the sick man's hand, spoke kindly to him in a gentle voice. How powerful is the force of kindness! Those calm words soothed the mind of the youth, and he remained more quiet, while John endeavoured to discover his disease. Exposure and neglect, it seemed, had brought on a fever, which threatened to be fatal. John gave him some medicine, bathed his burning temples, smoothed his pillow, and fanned him until he sank to sleep. Antonio brought from the schooner some tea which he prepared; and before night they

had the satisfaction of seeing him more comfortable. It was not John's way to do things by halves ; and seeing that the poor sufferer could have no attention from his associates, and would probably die if neglected, he sent Antonio on with the vessel, while he remained with his sick charge. The remedies which he had administered soon broke the fever ; and now that the patient was calm, he learned his history.

Edward Reader had been brought up by pious parents ; but falling into evil company, he had been induced to leave his father's house, and in company with a band of reckless youths, came out in this enterprise. But now he saw his sin and folly, and how frail a dependence is the friendship of the wicked.

As his young friend read and talked with him he shed tears of repentance, and begged John to take him away from the

scene of dissipation and wretchedness into which he had brought himself.

As soon as he was able to bear it, John and Antonio carried him to the skiff, and thus brought him on board the ‘Sally.’ The sea breezes restored him in a few days, and then John took him to his mother, that by her good nursing his cure might be completed.

Edward returned to his parents, much wiser and better than when he left his home. Neither he nor his family ever forgot the kindness of John. He called him his deliverer ; and every year a handsome present was sent to the family in token of gratitude.

CHAPTER IX.

‘ GIVE AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN UNTO YOU.’

I HAVE mentioned that it was John’s great desire to own the schooner in

which he had passed so much of his time. He loved every plank in the ‘Sally,’ and had hoped that, by the time he was twenty-five, he would be able to buy out the owner.

But though he had laid by every penny that he could spare, he found that he had not half the amount which was required; and what made him feel more discouraged, Captain Morgan wished to sell the vessel immediately, as he intended to retire.

John might have made money much faster if he would have worked on the Sabbath, as he saw many do who were in the same business, without any scruples. But he knew that the blessing of God would never rest on those who broke His commandment; and he valued that blessing more than gold and silver. He felt disappointed, but tried to be submissive to the will of God, and to go on in the discharge of his duty. ‘I have been happy

here,' he thought; 'but if God's blessing be with me, if I live near to my Saviour, I will be happy wherever I am placed.' Then, as he noticed the lighter scudding gracefully before the wind, he sighed and said, 'I shall be grieved to part with my pretty boat.'

His mind was filled with such thoughts as he lay-to, by the side of a ship which had just arrived, laden with passengers and goods.

As there was some delay in the arrival of the steamboat, several of the passengers employed John to convey them to the town. Among them John observed an elderly gentleman, who looked pale and feeble. With his usual kindness, the young man stepped forward and assisted the stranger down the side of the ship, and when he was on board the lighter, John wrapped his cloak around him, to protect him from the keen air.

They were soon under weigh for the town. While they were sailing along, the stranger, looking up, observed the flag floating from the top of the mast, on which was inscribed the name of the schooner. ‘The “Sally!”’ he said; ‘that name is very familiar to me. Pray, sir,’ turning to John, who was at the helm, ‘what is your name?’

‘John Leddam, sir.’

‘Mine is Reeder, and you must be Edward’s friend.’

They met like old friends, and Mr Reeder soon made himself acquainted with John’s troubles. He inquired how much money he needed to make up the whole sum for the purchase of the schooner.

‘Oh, sir,’ said John, ‘a large amount; it will take me three years at least, with good business, to earn it. I could borrow, but I never will run in debt. I wish to go by

the Bible rule, “Owe no man anything, but to love one another.””

The old gentleman smiled, but said nothing.

A day or two after this conversation Captain Morgan came to him.

‘Well, John, the “Sally” is yours; your friend Mr Reeder will advance the money. He says that he owes you much more than this for saving the life of his son.’

CHAPTER X.

THE CONCLUSION.

Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.’

THE joyful day arrived at last when our friend John was rewarded for his industry and honesty. He was the owner and commander of the ‘Sally.’ Captain Sam was so gratified that he gave a great

dinner on the occasion. But there was no one more pleased with John's fair prospects than his friend Antonio. He gave thanks aloud in the fulness of his heart, clasped John in his arms, hugged Harry, and at last fairly cried for joy. The old sailor did not, however, long enjoy the pleasure of working under his young captain. Being exposed to a heavy rain, he took a severe cold, which settled on his lungs; and when spring came, with its sweet breezes and warm sun, Antonio was not able to enjoy them.

John brought him home, where his mother and sisters nursed him tenderly through his long illness, and he devoted to him all the time he could spare from his business; for it revived the sick man's spirits to see John's face.

Many an hour through the summer did the young man pass by the bedside of the

suffering Christian, reading to him the precious promises of God, and uniting with him in praise and prayer.

'It was you,' said Antonio, 'that showed me the way to Jesus. Oh! that reading of the Bible—it was my salvation!'

When the leaves began to fall before the winds of autumn, the old sailor was called home to rest. In his last moments he clasped the hand of John, and employed his dying breath in blessing his 'own boy,' as he had always called his young friend.

John followed Antonio to the grave with sincere grief. He erected a stone to his memory. It had only his name 'Antonio' engraven on it, but that was sufficient for John's heart; and there was no one else to care for the poor sailor who rested in that humble grave. But precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. However humble may be

the Christian's lot on earth, or obscure his last resting-place, he has a happy home in heaven. A few moments in that blessed world will make us forget all the sorrows of a long life of trouble.

John, or Captain John as he is now called, still sails in the 'Sally,' and has as much work as he can do. He has bought a comfortable house in a pleasant suburb, where he has settled his mother and sisters. It is painted white, and the porch is shaded with sweet roses. It looks like a cottage of content, and it is so indeed. Mrs Leddam and John do not forget their dear Henry, nor their old friend Antonio, but they hope to meet them at last ; and while they enjoy their quiet home, they often unite their hearts and voices in thanking that merciful God who had thus kindly guided and blessed the poor fatherless boy.

WHAT A LITTLE BOY CAN DO.



‘WISH, I wish, I wish,’ said a little boy, who awoke early one morning, and lay in bed thinking; ‘I wish I was grown up, so as to do some good. If I was governor, I’d make good laws; or I’d be a missionary; or I’d get rich, and give away so much to poor people; but I am only a little boy, and it will take me plenty of years to grow up.’ Was he going to put off doing good till then? ‘Well,’ he said to himself while he was dressing, ‘I know what I CAN do. I can be good; that’s left to little boys.’ Therefore, when he was dressed, he knelt and asked God to help him to be good, and try to serve Him all day with all his heart, and not FORGET.

Then he went down stairs to finish his lessons.

No sooner was he seated with his clean slate before him, than his mother called him to run into the wood-house for his little brother. He did not want to leave his lesson, yet he cheerfully said, ‘I’ll go, mother ;’ and away he ran. And how do you think he found ‘bubby ?’ With a sharp axe in his hand. ‘I chop,’ he said ; and quite likely the next moment he would have chopped off his little toes. The little boy only thought of minding his mother ; but who can tell if his ready obedience did not save his baby brother from being a cripple for life ?

As he was going on an errand for his mother, he saw a poor woman whose foot had slipped on the newly-made ice, and she fell ; and in falling she had spilled her bag of beans and basket of apples, and some wicked boys were snatching up her apples and running off with them. The little boy stopped and said, ‘Let me help you to pick up your beans and apples ’

and his nimble fingers quickly helped her out of her mishap. He only thought of being kind ; he did not know how his kind act comforted the poor woman long after she got home, and how she prayed God to bless him.

At dinner, as his father and mother were talking, his father said roughly, ‘I shan’t do anything for that man’s son ; the old man always did his best to injure me.’ ‘But, father,’ said the little boy, looking up into his father’s face, ‘does not the Bible say we must return good for evil ?’ The little boy did not know that his father thought of what his son had said all the afternoon, and said within himself, ‘My boy is more of a Christian than I am ; I must be a better man.’

When he came home from school at night, he went to the cage and found his dear canary-bird dead. ‘Oh, mother ! and I tended birdie so, and I loved him so, and he sang so sweetly ;’ and the little boy burst into tears over his poor favourite. ‘Who gave birdie’s life, and who took it again ?’ asked his mother, stroking

his head. ‘God,’ he answered through his tears, ‘and He knows best;’ and he tried to hush himself.

A lady sat in a dark corner in the room. She had lost her two birdies; and though she hoped they had taken angels’ wings and gone to nestle in the heavenly land, she would rather have her little sons back to her nest again. But when she beheld the little boy’s patience and submission to his Father in heaven, she said, ‘I too will trust Him, like this little child.’ Her heart was touched, and she went home with a little spring of healing gushing up there, and she became henceforth a better mother to the children yet left to her.

When the little boy lay on his pillow that night, he thought, ‘I am too small to do any good; but oh, I do want to be good, and to love the Saviour who came down from heaven to die for me. I do want to become one of the heavenly Father’s dear children.’

The heavenly Father’s children are sometimes called children of light; and does it not

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seem as if beams of light shone from this little child, warming, blessing everybody that came in his way? Who will say he did not do good?



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